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JOINT COUNCIL ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

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JOINT COUNCIL ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
MEETING, APRIL 16-17, 1980
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

103

Attendees:

Anson R. Bertrand, Cochairman
John S. Robins, Cochairman
W. Henry Anthony
Kenneth R. Farrell
Homer C. Folks
Mary Nell Greenwood
R. J. Hildreth
John P. Jordan
Terry B. Kinney, Jr.
Richard D. Morrison
Susan M. Oace
Harold F. Robinson
Robert Lee Scarborough
Keith Shea
Richard A. Skok
George W. Sledge
Charles Smallwood
Don Therriault
W. I. Thomas
Samuel T. Waters
James Nielson, Executive Director
Susan G. Schram, Executive Secretary

Others Present:

Raymond Altevogt, National Food Processors
Alan Bird, USDA/ESCS
Norman Berg, USDA/SCS
John M. Brazzel, USDA/SEA
Mark Buchanan, USDA/SEA
Elwood Caldwell, University of Minnesota
Jane Coulter, USDA/SEA
Jim Dyson, USDA/SEA
Bob Eddleman, IR-6, Mississippi State University
Gary Evans, USDA/SEA
Bob Frary, University of Wyoming
Olan Forker, Cornell University
Elliot Fox, Consulting Services
Marshall Godwin, USDA/ESCS
Robert Gray, Executive Director, National
Lands Study
Clare Harris, USDA/SEA
Leon Hunter, USDA/SEA
Allan Johnson, USDA/SEA
Charles Kraenzle, USDA/SEA
Betty Lewis, Cornell University
Dick Lieberman, Senate Appropriations Committee
Yao-Chi Lu, USDA/SEA
Robert Marshak, USDA/SEA
Keith Marvin, GAO
James Meyers, USDA/SEA
Ralph McCracken, USDA/SEA
Roger Mitchell, North Central Regional Council
Merrill Petoskey, USDA/SEA
Gilbert H. Porter, Northeast Regional Council
Joseph Purcell, IR-6, Beltsville
Vernon Ruttan, University of Minnesota
Larry Summers, USDA/SEA
John Stovall, USDA/SEA
Joseph Wholey, HEW
Jon Wooten, USDA/SEA
Fred Westbrook, USDA/SEA

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PROCUREMENT SECTION
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

1. Presiding Cochairmen: Anson R. Bertrand and John S. Robins

2. Membership

Cochairman Robins welcomed four new members to the Joint Council:

- Robert Lee Scarborough - a farmer from South Carolina who was elected to the Council by the Users Advisory Board.
- John Patrick Jordan - Director, Experiment Station, Colorado State University.
- Susan Oace - Associate Professor of Nutrition, University of California, Berkeley.
- George Sledge - Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin.

3. Staff

James Nielson announced changes in staff status:

- Susan G. Schram is serving as Executive Secretary to the Joint Council as of April 14, 1980.
- Charles Beer has left the position of Chief, Current and Future Priorities Staff to become Assistant Administrator for Agricultural Programs, Extension. The Current and Future Priorities Staff and the Evaluation-Impact Staff will be combined into one staff.
- Alan Bird and Fred Westbrook were thanked for their work as Acting Executive Secretaries.

4. Reports

Cochairman Robins brought several recently completed reports to the attention of the Council:

- The 1979 Annual Report of the Joint Council to the Secretary of Agriculture
- The 1979 Annual Report on Food and Agricultural Sciences by the Secretary of Agriculture to the President and Congress
- Areas of Emphasis in the Food and Agricultural Sciences for the Early 1980's, a Joint Council report synthesizing information

regarding critical issues facing the food and agricultural sciences in the next five years

- Research, Extension and Higher Education in Human Nutrition, a Joint Council report which delineates work underway in human nutrition programs and specifies coordination needs
- Research, Extension and Higher Education for Small Farms, a report of the Joint Council that inventories existing work underway, identifies needed work, and specifies coordination needs in activities related to small farms.
- Extension Evaluation Report
- Five-Year Plan for Renewable Resources Extension

The reports have been reviewed and accepted by the Council.

5. New Joint Council Charter

James Nielson brought the new Joint Council Charter to the attention of the members. The new Charter reemphasizes that the Council is a forum for increasing cooperative planning and coordination among the members of the food and agricultural science and education community.

6. Executive Committee Reports

a. Cochairman Robins reported that the Executive Committee met March 13 and April 16. Executive Committee meeting action items included:

- The report, Increasing Public Understanding of Agricultural Science and Education, has been referred to the Joint Council Strategies Committee for further consideration.
- The Crop Loss Study Report (dealing with production aspects) has been accepted by the Executive Committee. A second design team will be established to deal with postharvest crop losses. This USDA design team will not be a part of the Joint Council committee structure, but the Executive Committee may make suggestions regarding its membership.
- The Renewable Resources Extension report was received by the Executive Committee.

b. Other highlights from previous Executive Committee meetings include:

- The report on 1979-1984 Projections from the Interim National Research Planning Committee will soon be published as a report to the Joint Council.

- The Executive Committee has recommended persons to participate in the OTA assessment of U.S. food and agriculture research.
- Plans call for the Research Facilities Study to be completed by the end of May.
- A new travel policy was adopted at the January Council meeting. Under this policy, members of Joint Council committees and study groups will not be reimbursed for travel from the USDA-Joint Council account unless they submit a written request to the Executive Secretary stating that no other source of funds is available and that their ability to participate is contingent upon the USDA paying their travel costs. Travel approvals will be made by the Executive Director consulting with the Cochairmen when necessary.
- The reauthorization of Title XIV may be dealt with separately from the Farm Bill which will be before the House in 1981. The Joint Council needs to be prepared to make recommendations to the USDA and the Congress regarding Title XIV legislation and the Joint Council structure and function.
- Correction needed on p. 2, item 3, January 16 Executive Committee Actions:
 - a. Phase II on postharvest activities was mentioned but it was stressed that these activities were beyond the scope of the Crop Losses Committee at this time.
 - b. The April report to the Executive Committee will still deal with preharvest and harvest losses. More details are to be provided on an overall design to analyze and evaluate these losses based on a report from the National Crop Loss Design Committee.

7. The Proceedings of the January 16-18, 1980 Joint Council meeting were approved.

8. Liaison Report from the National Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisory Board

- Henry Anthony reported that the Users Advisory Board met in February in Orlando to draft its Annual Report to the President and Congress, commenting on the Federal Executive Budget request for research and extension for FY 1981.
- The April meeting was held at Berkeley, California, to focus on increasing problems of nutrition and food distribution. Public forums were held at the February and April meetings.

- The Board has set its 1980 agenda in terms of nine general issues: (1) structure, competition and equity in the food and agriculture system; (2) natural resources and sustainable yield; (3) objectives for U.S. Agriculture; (4) qualitative vs quantitative aspects of food; (5) basic and applied research; (6) organization and structure of research and extension; (7) Federal role in research and extension; (8) economics of the food and agriculture system; (9) social and economic effects of research and extension.
- Anthony highlighted the Board's concern that research and extension have not participated in budget growth commensurate with other R and D agencies of the Federal Government.
- Robert Lee Scarborough pointed out that the Board represents a group with widely divergent viewpoints and differing opinions on which way to proceed on problems presented to them. Increased understanding and communication are occurring as the group is exposed to various parts of the food and agriculture system. There still is a need for timely and accurate information about potential impacts of alternative policies.

9. Agricultural Mechanization Task Force

- James Nielson reported that five members of the Users Advisory Board and five members of the Joint Council will comprise an agricultural mechanization task force, cochaired by Nielson and Susan Seckler, Deputy Director for Economics, Policy Analysis, and Budget. Joint Council members include: Jordan, Morrison, Baldwin, Farrell, Hildreth. The group will evaluate the economic, technological and social impacts of mechanization with emphasis on labor displacement. Guidelines developed will advise USDA administrator of the types of mechanization research that should or should not be done with Federal dollars. The guidelines will be made available to others, such as state agricultural experiment station directors, for them to consider.

10. Report of Plans under the Resource Conservation Act

- Norman Berg, Administrator, Soil Conservation Service, reported that 68,658 responses to the call for public comment on the RCA Appraisal Parts I and II and the Program Report and Environmental Impact Statement have been received by the Response Analysis Center. Comments will be summarized by mid-May for report to the Secretary of Agriculture's Coordinating Committee on Soil Conservation Programs.

- Based on these comments, the Coordinating Committee will develop 3-5 alternative soil and water conservation programs for consideration by the Secretary. The Secretary's preferred programs and their impacts will be available for public comment. The Coordinating Committee will then develop a final report to the President and Congress.
- Ralph McCracken pointed out that the next round of RCA documents will more clearly specify research and extension needs. David Dyer, SEA representative on the response evaluation team, will summarize comments relating to research and extension.

11. National Agricultural Lands Study Update

- Robert Gray, Executive Director, explained that the National Agricultural Lands Study was created by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality to look at the causes and extent of agricultural land conversion and its effect on future food and fiber production.
- Primary objectives of this inter-agency effort are to examine (1) the current land base and projected availability in the next 20 years, (2) the changing complexion of the rural community, (3) effectiveness of current State and county programs in protection of farm land, (4) impact of Federal programs on farmlands, (5) tax policies that may be against agriculture.
- Public meetings were held to determine public perception of this issue. A draft final report will be available to meeting participants and others this fall, and the final report to the President will be made by January 1981.

12. Program Structure Study Group Report

- Chairman George Sledge presented the report of the Program Structure Study Group in response to the Joint Council's October charge to: (1) inventory current program structures and users of those structures in the food and agricultural sciences; (2) suggest alternatives for, and merits of a better structure to facilitate joint planning, management, and implementation of research, education and extension programs.
- The study group report concluded that:
 1. The existing program structures and management information systems used in the food and agricultural sciences, while generally meeting the needs of individual performers, are less

responsive to the needs of SEA managers and organizations such as the Joint Council who wish to "look across all performers" in considering policy, budgetary, priority, and other implications for the total food and agricultural science system.

2. It is feasible and beneficial to move toward an encompassing program structure or program information classification system that would permit summarizing information, conducting analyses and/or "looking across all performers."
3. Two alternatives are most viable, (a) create a structure adapted to major existing structures and systems (i.e., CRIS, EMIS) or (b) create a new structure and request performers to provide information according to its format.
4. The development of such a program structure or program information classification system would foster improved communication within the food and agricultural science system and between the system and outsiders (ranging from the general public to legislative and executive bodies).

- Cochairman Robins stated the Executive Committee's recommendation that the Program Structure Study Group continue as a steering committee to guide the efforts of two staff groups (to be appointed):
 1. Program structure/program taxonomy staff group -- to interact with necessary players to develop a unified program structure for agricultural science and education.
 2. Management information systems staff group -- will look at existing MIS taxonomies in terms of what is being recorded, what is not being recorded, and note changes, additions, or new systems needed to be able to crosswalk data from revised MIS taxonomies into a unified program structure.
- The Council voted to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee as stated.
- A complete proposal will be developed by the study group, reviewed by the Joint Council, and provided to such policy groups as ECOP, RICOP, ESCOP, and ASCUFRO for review and comment. The Joint Council will consider comments, modify the proposal and make plans for implementation.

13. Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Energy

- J. P. Jordan, Chairman, emphasized that the USDA must clarify its role in energy. Although the USDA has millions of dollars in energy

programs, other agencies (particularly the DOE) have billions of dollars in programs. This committee was appointed as a special effort of the Joint Council in 1980 to improve coordination among energy programs in agriculture.

- The committee has cited energy self-sufficiency in agriculture as an achievable objective.
- Committee priorities include:
 - a. Identification of current agriculturally related energy programs in agencies within and outside the USDA.
 - b. Summary of structures in place for communications, coordination, and management of agriculture energy initiatives.
 - c. Focus for programs in the immediate future.
 - d. Long-range planning on policy issues focusing on tomorrow's agriculture.
- Energy ad hoc committee members include: J. P. Jordan, Chairman; Gale VandeBerg (ECOP); C. A. Pettibone (RICOP); and Warren Doolittle (FS). Staff includes: Bille Hougart (SEA); Andrew Cowan (SEA-AR); Glenda Pifer (SEA-E); and Eilif Miller (SEA-CR).

14. Evaluation Workshop

The Council devoted one-third of its one and a half day meeting to a workshop on evaluation.

a. Opening comments

- Mike Brazzel, Chief of the Evaluation and Impact Staff in SEA-JPE and moderator of the workshop, stated that the objective of the session was to provide background for Council exploration of its Congressional charge in Title XIV:

"(To) analyze and evaluate the economic, environmental, and social impacts of agricultural research, extension and teaching programs conducted in the U.S."
- Brazzel cited changes that are affecting evaluation: technical and social accountability are being stressed more; the Federal-State partnership is being closely examined; increasing emphasis is being placed on the "social contract" between providers and users of public funds; evaluation is broadening in focus and receiving increased emphasis and additional resources.

b. Panel presentations regarding the state of the art in evaluation

- Bob Eddleman, IR-6, provided a comprehensive digest of major findings from evaluations of food and agricultural research, extension and higher education programs, discussed the state of the art in evaluation, and reported on who is doing applicable evaluation research and where.

In Eddleman's opinion, the various performers in the food and agricultural sciences should be subjected to various degrees of rigor in evaluation and accountability, e.g., basic research -- minimum accountability; applied research and extension -- more accountability; developmental research, extension and education -- maximum accountability.

- Joseph Wholey, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Evaluation, HEW, discussed evaluation of Federal programs from a non-agriculture perspective. Wholey defined program evaluation as "measuring the progress of a program toward a set of objectives." Evaluation should help inform policy and/or management decisions. It should lead to changes.

Wholey recommends two kinds of efforts in evaluation:

(1) Evaluability assessment: determining whether a program has agreed upon measurable objectives and explicitly stated testable assumptions linking program expenditures to program activities, program activities to intended outcomes, and program outcomes to program objectives and (2) performance monitoring -- obtaining an agreed upon set of intermediate outcome objectives, measuring progress periodically, and bringing the information to the attention of managers, policymakers, and resource allocators.

c. Integration of workshop comments

Two other panelists responded to and integrated comments from Eddleman and Wholey: Keith Marvin, Associate Director for Program Evaluation, Program Analysis Division, U.S. General Accounting Office, and Dick Lieberman, Professional Staff member, Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee.

- Keith Marvin is working with agencies to improve evaluation and make it more useful to policymakers. He presented a useful model of the evaluation function and suggested six criteria for an effectively administered program: (1) an acceptable description of objectives, (2) sufficient activities to reach those objectives, (3) performance information is received by relevant persons, (4) program performance meets expectations set for it, (5) program status regarding criteria 1-4 shows improvement over time, (6) actual program performance improves over time.

- Dick Lieberman suggested five rules to be followed when providing Congress with evaluation data: (1) evaluations need to be understandable to the average layman -- be able to explain your program in five minutes to a group of ten senators with diverse backgrounds in such a way that they could understand what you did and what you found, (2) evaluations need to be scientifically defensible with no procedural or methodological flaws, (3) evaluations need to reflect what is going on in the program as a whole not what is happening in an isolated instance or area, (4) evaluations need to be timely, (5) evaluations need to be succinct and summarized.

d. Comments relating panel discussion to responsibilities of the Joint Council

Vernon Ruttan, Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota, made comments integrating and relating discussion by panel members to the evaluation responsibilities of the Joint Council and led discussion involving the panelists and Council members. Ruttan believes that two kinds of evaluation questions must be answered in the food and agricultural sciences: (1) What are the possibilities of advancing knowledge or technology if resources are allocated to a particular problem area? (2) What will be the value to society of the new knowledge or technology if the research is successful? Ruttan praised the dual Federal-State system of research in the food and agricultural sciences for its ability to explore different directions of research without leading the whole system into major mistakes. He observed that applied research should direct or redirect basic research as well as basic research discovering which way applied research should go.

e. The Joint Council Executive Committee will follow up on the evaluation area at its May meeting.

15. Structure for Planning and Coordination

- W. I. Thomas reported that two Regional Councils have been formed (Northeast and North Central). The Western Region will be meeting May 1; the Southern Region will meet later in May.
- Gilbert Porter (Chairman, Northeast Regional Council) informed the Council that the first meeting of the Northeast Regional Council took place in Beltsville on January 23 with 17 enthusiastic participants. They will meet again May 1 to establish operational procedures and functional committees for teaching, research, and extension.

- Roger Mitchell (Chairman, North Central Regional Council) reported that the North Central Regional Council met February 29 and adopted two resolutions: that the JC support CARET recommendations for fiscal '81 budget and that a representative of human nutrition be added to the Interim National Research Planning Committee. Committees for teaching, research and extension are being organized and the Council will be meeting again in June.

16. Report from the Interim National Research Planning Committee

- Clare Harris reported that last year the Interim National Research Planning Committee queried research administrators about 1979-84 program projections.
 - a. Assuming zero changes in SY's, the following were cited as the top areas for expansion: (1) general resources or technology; (2) food safety; (3) beef; (4) food and nutrition; (5) water and water sheds. The following are cited as areas for decrease: (1) marketing and competition (largest cut); (2) sheep; (3) fruit; (4) forests, watershed, soils, pollution; (5) vegetable crops.
 - b. Assuming a 20% increase for research programs, six areas with the largest increase included: (1) general resources or technology; (2) foods and nutrition; (3) beef; (4) forage, range, pasture; (5) soil and land use; (6) fruit. Areas with the smallest increase would include: (1) technical assistance; (2) research or administration of research; (3) recreation; (4) tobacco; (5) remote sensing.
- The report will eventually be published as a report of the Joint Council.

17. Manpower Study Report

- Homer Folks and Jane Coulter discussed the Higher Education Manpower Study undertaken to identify the relationship between the current and future supply of higher education graduates in the food and agricultural sciences and the availability of employment opportunities for those graduates. The results of the study show current and future shortages of graduates in several educational fields in the food and agricultural sciences. The data suggest that educational planning and policymaking must address these shortages if the nation is to maintain a qualified supply of food and agricultural professionals. The complete data should be examined for details.

18. Report from the Committee on the Coordination of Marketing Research

Olan Forker, Chairman, provided an update on committee suggestions for more effective coordination of marketing research. A final report will be available by the end of June.

19. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will be held jointly with the Users Advisory Board. The two groups will meet together the evening of July 15 and until 3:00 p.m. on July 16. The Council will continue its session July 16 to noon on July 18.